

Message Text

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15

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9470

CONFIDENTIAL SEOUL 2603

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, KS

SUBJ: MISSIONARY DEMONSTRATION AT EMBASSY

REF: STATE 080677

1. SEVEN AMERICAN MISSIONARIES HELD 10-MINUTE
DEMONSTRATION IN PARKING LOT IN FRONT OF EMBASSY ENTRANCE
APRIL 16 AT NOON. DEPICTING EXECUTED PRP PRISONERS,
DEMONSTRATORS DONNED BLACK HOODS AND NOOSES AND CARRIED
SIGNS SAYING "IS THIS THE RESULT OF 'QUIET DIPLOMACY?'",
"MUST THE US GOVERNMENT SUPPORT THE OPPRESSION OF
HUMAN RIGHTS?", AND "IS THIS NOTHING TO YOU?". KOREAN POLICE
WERE PRESENT OUTSIDE OF EMBASSY AREA, BUT MADE NO ATTEMPT TO
ENTER, NOR WERE THEY OBSERVED APPROACHING DEMONSTRATORS WHEN
THE LATTER LEFT THE EMBASSY AREA. SOME REPORTERS FOR KOREAN AND
FOREIGN PRESS PHOTOGRAPHED DEMONSTRATIONS WITHIN PARKING
LOT, WHILE OTHERS COVERED DEMONSTRATION FROM OUTSIDE.
PRESS ALSO MET WITH DEMONSTRATORS ON STREET AFTER
THEIR DEPARTURE. PRESS HAD OBVIOUSLY BEEN ALERTED IN
ADVANCE BY DEMONSTRATORS.

2. DEMONSTRATORS (METHODISTS GENE MATTHEWS, W. RICE,
WALTER DURST; CATHOLICS JOHN TYNAN AND BENEDICT ZWEBER;
SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN CHARLES KRAUTH; AND W. BASINGER
(DENOMINATION UNKNOWN) HANDED POL COUNS STATEMENT ADDRESSED
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TO AMBASSADOR CITING UNJUST EXECUTION OF PRP MEMBERS.

IT ACKNOWLEDGES USG STATEMENT OF "DEEP REGRET" OVER THIS ACTION BUT CLAIMS SUCH EXPRESSIONS OF REGRET INADEQUATE. STATEMENT ASKS FOR CLARIFICATION OF USG INTENTIONS WITH REGARD TO "DETERIORATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN KOREA" AND ASKS THAT US "CONTINUE ITS ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ROK ONLY TO EXTENT THAT SUCH ASSISTANCE CONTRIBUTES TO THE REALIZATION OF FREEDOM AND HUMAN RIGHTS."

3. DURING MEETING IN EMBASSY WITH POL COUNS AND LABOR ATTACHE, DEMONSTRATORS PRESENTED FAMILIAR ARGUMENTS THAT US AID SHORING UP UNDEMOCRATIC REGIME AND THAT USG NOT SUFFICIENTLY CONCERNED ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS IN KOREA. POL COUNS REPLIED THAT US AID AIMED AT SECURITY OF ENTIRE KOREAN PEOPLE AND THAT IN OUR WIDESPREAD CONTACTS WITH OPPOSITION ELEMENTS, WE HAD FOUND NO ONE URGING US TO WITHDRAW OUR SUPPORT FOR ROK. ON CONTRARY, OPPOSITION FIGURES GENERALLY FAVORED US PRESENCE AND COMMITMENT AS A FACTOR WORKING IN FAVOR OF KOREANDEMOCRACY. POL COUNS NOTED THAT US POSITION ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES WERE REPEATEDLY MADE KNOWN TO ROKG AND IN MANY INSTANCES WE HAD EMPHASIZED HOW LIMITATIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS COMPLICATED PROBLEM OF SECURING US SUPPORT FOR CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO KOREA. MISSIONARIES SAID THEY UNDERSTOOD USG POSITION BUT THEY STILL FAVORED MORE ACTIVE MOVES TO PUSH PAK TOWARD DEMOCRACY.

4. ON DAY PRIOR TO DEMONSTRATION CATHOLIC MISSIONARY HAD INFORMED EMBOFF THAT MISSIONARY DEMONSTRATION WOULD TAKE PLACE ON APRIL 17 PROTESTING FAILURE OF US TO ISSUE STRONG STATEMENT ON PRP EXECUTIONS. POL COUNS SUBSEQUENTLY MET WITH METHODIST MISSIONARY EDWARD POITRAS TO WXPLAIN THE STRONG NATURE OF STATEMENT ISSUED BY DEPT SPOKESMAN (REFTEL) AND TO ASK HIM TO CONVEY TEXT TO THOSE INTENDING TO DEMONSTRATE, IF HE WAS ABLE TO LOCATE THEM. SUBSEQUENTLY, DEMONSTRATORS SAID POITRAS HAD CONVEYED MESSAGE, BUT THEY FELT OBLIGED TO GO THROUGH WITH THEIR MOVE.

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5. EMBASSY INTENDS TO RESPOND TO ANY PRESS INQUIRIES BY NOTING THAT AMERICAN CITIZENS DEMONSTRATED ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE BRIEFLY IN EMBASSY PARKING LOT, HELD MEETING WITH POL COUNS AND DELIVERED BRIEF MESSAGE. IF ASKED ABOUT MEETING OR MESSAGE WE WILL REPLY CONTENT WAS PRIVATE AND THAT WE HAVE NO FURTHER COMMENT.

6. DURING DEMONSTRATION EMBASSY GATES WERE CLOSED

AND POLICE WERE INFORMED THAT EMBASSY DID NOT WISH
THEM TO INTERFERE.
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